represented by P101Q; (8) a valine amino acid residue mutated to another Group 2 amino acid residue at position 111, in one embodiment the mutation represented by V111I; (9) a Group 4 amino acid residue mutated to a Group 2 amino acid residue at position 133, in one embodiment the mutation represented by S133L; (10) a Group 3 amino acid residue mutated to a Group 2 amino acid residue at position 141, in one embodiment the mutation represented by E141V; (11) a Group 3 amino acid residue mutated to a Group 5 amino acid residue at position 141, in one embodiment the mutation represented by E141K; (12) a Group 4 amino acid residue mutated to Group 6 amino acid residue at position 153, in one embodiment the mutation represented by C153Y; (13) a Group 4 amino acid residue mutated to a Group 5 amino acid residue at position 153, in one embodiment the mutation represented by C153R; (14) a Group 4 amino acid residue mutated to a Group 1 amino acid residue at position 281, in one embodiment the mutation represented by T281A; (15) a Group 3 amino acid residue mutated to a Group 2 amino acid residue at position 367, in one embodiment the mutation represented by N367I; (16) a Group 3 amino acid residue mutated to a Group 6 amino acid residue at position 367, in one embodiment the mutation represented by N367Y; (17) a Group 1 amino acid residue mutated to Group 4 amino acid residue at position 389, in one embodiment the mutation represented by P389S; and (18) a Group 1 amino acid residue mutated to a Group 2 amino acid residue at position 389, in one embodiment the mutation represented by P389L.

In some embodiments of the first aspect, the invention provides regulator proteins with at least two, or at least three, or at least four, or at least five, or at least six, or at least seven, or at least eight, or at least nine, or at least ten, or at least eleven, or at least twelve, or at least thirteen, or at least fourteen, or at least fifteen, or at least sixteen, or at least seventeen, or at least eighteen of the above described specific mutations.

In other embodiments of the first aspect, the invention provides an isolated lovE variant regulator protein selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:41, SEQ ID NO:42, SEQ ID NO:43, SEQ ID NO:44, SEQ ID NO:45, SEQ ID NO:46, SEQ ID NO:47, SEQ ID NO:48, SEQ ID NO:49, SEQ ID NO:50, SEQ ID NO:51, SEQ ID NO:52, SEQ ID NO:53, SEQ ID NO:54, SEQ ID NO:55, SEQ ID NO:56, SEQ ID NO:57, SEQ ID NO:58, SEQ ID NO:59, SEQ ID NO:60, SEQ ID NO:61, SEQ ID NO:62, SEQ ID NO:63, SEQ ID NO:64, and SEQ ID NO:65.

In a second aspect, the invention provides a nucleic acid molecule encoding a lovE regulator of the first aspect of the invention. By way of non-limiting example, the invention provides a nucleic acid molecule encoding the lovE variant regulator protein selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:66, SEQ ID NO:67, SEQ ID NO:68, SEQ ID NO:69, SEQ ID NO:70, SEQ ID NO:71, SEQ ID NO:72, SEQ ID NO:73, SEQ ID NO:74, SEQ ID NO:75, SEQ ID NO:76, SEQ ID NO:78, SEQ ID NO:79, SEQ ID NO:81, SEQ ID NO:82, SEQ ID NO:83, SEQ ID NO:84, SEQ ID NO:86, SEQ ID NO:87, SEQ ID NO:88, SEQ ID NO:89, and SEQ ID NO:90.

In a third aspect, the invention provides a method of increasing the activity of a protein that regulates secondary metabolite production comprising: (a) selecting a nucleic acid comprising a polynucleotide encoding a protein regulator of secondary metabolite production; (b) mutating the nucleic acid to create a plurality of nucleic acid molecules encoding variant regulator proteins of secondary metabolite production; and (c) selecting a variant regulator protein with more activity than the cognate, wild-type protein.

In various embodiments of the third aspect, the secondary metabolite is a fungal secondary metabolite. In certain embodiments of the third aspect, the protein regulator of secondary metabolite production is a transcription factor. In certain embodiments of the third aspect, the protein regulator of secondary metabolite production is a transmembrane transporter, protein that

mediates secretion, kinase, G-protein, cell surface receptor, GTPase activating protein, guanine nucleotide exchange factor, phosphatase, protease, phosphodiesterase, bacterial protein toxin, importin, RNA-binding protein, SCF complex component, adherin, or protein encoded within a biosynthetic cluster. In certain other embodiments of the third aspect, the variant regulator protein is selected to have more activity in a heterologous cell and/or more activity in a homologous cell than the cognate, wild-type regulator protein. In certain embodiments, the variant regulator protein is selected to have more activity in a heterologous cell and/or more activity in a homologous cell than the cognate, wild-type protein and to cause more secondary metabolite to be produced in a homologous cell and/or a heterologous cell when compared to the cognate, wild-type regulator protein. In a particularly preferred embodiment, the variant regulator protein is a lovE variant regulator protein.

In a fourth aspect, the invention provides a method of increasing production of a secondary metabolite comprising: (a) selecting a nucleic acid comprising a polynucleotide encoding a protein regulator of secondary metabolite production; (b) mutating the nucleic acid to create a plurality of nucleic acid molecules encoding variant regulator proteins of secondary metabolite production; (c) selecting a variant regulator protein with more activity than the cognate, wild-type protein; and (d) expressing the selected variant regulator protein in a cell, thereby increasing production of the secondary metabolite in the cell.

In various embodiments of the fourth aspect, the secondary metabolite is a fungal secondary metabolite. In certain embodiments of the third aspect, the protein regulator of secondary metabolite production is a transcription factor. In certain embodiments of the fourth aspect, the protein regulator of secondary metabolite production is a transmembrane transporter, a